

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 86

WHEREAS, The life and achievements of the Honorable José Tomás Canales, a former state representative and civil rights trailblazer, are being honored on the 100th anniversary of his landmark 1919 investigation of the Texas Rangers; and

WHEREAS, Born into a prominent Nueces County ranching family in 1877, J. T. Canales earned his law degree from the University of Michigan; from 1900 to 1903, he practiced in Corpus Christi and Laredo before settling in Brownsville, where he spent the next two decades as a lawyer and a public official; and

WHEREAS, In addition to serving as superintendent of the Cameron County public schools and as a county judge, Mr. Canales spent five terms as a member of the Texas House of Representatives, holding office from 1905 to 1911 and from 1917 to 1921; the only Hispanic state representative at the time, he provided an important voice for the diverse populations living in the Lower Rio Grande Valley; and

WHEREAS, One of Representative Canales's most notable accomplishments was his 1919 investigation into the Texas Rangers for their actions during the 1910s, in particular the massacre of 15 unarmed ethnic Mexican men and boys, when the Mexican Revolution roiled the border area; the Canales Investigation, as it became known, shined a light on the excessive violence carried out by the Rangers against residents of Mexican descent, which resulted in as many as 5,000 deaths between 1914 and 1919; though he faced opposition and death threats for his efforts, Representative Canales outlined numerous instances of misconduct by members of the law

enforcement agency, and the investigation ultimately resulted in the force being reorganized and reduced in number; and

WHEREAS, Representative Canales decided not to seek reelection in 1920 and retired from state office, but he remained active in Hispanic civil rights initiatives; he was integral to the founding of the League of United Latin American Citizens, and he served as Brownsville city attorney and chaired the Texas Council on Human Rights; a lifelong believer in the importance of accessible, high-quality education, he wrote numerous articles and books about Mexican American history and the development of South Texas; he passed away in Brownsville on March 30, 1976, at the age of 99; and

WHEREAS, J. T. Canales was a pioneering figure in the struggle for social justice in the Lone Star State, and his vision and leadership remain a continuing source of inspiration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 86th Legislature, hereby pay tribute to the legacy of José Tomás Canales and commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Canales Investigation.

Rodríguez

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on January 30, 2019.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate